

ABSTRACT

16 In accordance with the present invention, a NSP, such as Incumbent Local Exchange
17 Carrier (ILEC) or a Competitive Local Exchange Carrier (CLEC) can own and operate a
18 Value-Added Service (VAS) Gateway. By means of this gateway, the NSP provides its
19 subscribers and customers a unified access interface mechanism for them to access many
20 NSP (or third-party provider) services. According to the invention, the VAS Gateway
21 provides the first-stage of the subscriber's interaction capability with the NSP's domain via
22 a unified user interface for all of the subscriber's on-line information access, data
23 communications, service management, and vertical (value-added) services. For example,
24 the VAS Gateway presents the subscriber with an interactive menu helping the subscriber to
25 select an ISP, transport service or access to his/her corporate network server.